



California
Charter Schools
Association

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April 26, 2019

Hon. Mayor Albert Robles and City Councilmembers
Carson City Council
701 E. Carson Street
Carson, CA 90745

RE: Carson City Council Resolution No. 19-086

Dear Mayor Robles, Mayor Pro Tempore Hicks, and Carson City Councilmembers,

The California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) is a statewide, non-profit membership organization that supports more than 1,200 charter public schools and 600,000 charter public school students across the state of California. Our mission is to ensure that all public school students – notwithstanding race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or zip code – have access to a high-quality public education that promotes joy and rigor in every classroom.

To that end, we write to express our resounding support for GANAS Academy (“GANAS”), a new LAUSD charter public school that will serve students grades TK-5 in the City of Carson. GANAS was supported and approved by the LAUSD Board of Education in the Spring of 2018, along with hundreds of families, educators, and local leaders. Like all non-profit charter public schools throughout the state, GANAS is tuition-free, non-sectarian, accepts any and all interested students, and requires no testing for admissions. Moreover, the GANAS board and leadership are subject to strict academic, fiscal, and operational oversight by LAUSD. GANAS is slated to launch Fall 2019, and received an offer by LAUSD to co-locate on the campus of Catskill Avenue Elementary School (“Catskill”) pursuant to Proposition 39 (“Prop. 39”), a California state law.

We are advised, however, that Carson City Council has introduced a resolution – Resolution No. 19-086 – to support the teachers and parents of Catskill in their efforts to obstruct Prop. 39 law and prevent a shared, collaborative facilities arrangement with GANAS. Given that Prop. 39 is a legal mandate, we were surprised to learn that this Council – a public governmental agency entrusted with the responsibility of upholding the law – would encourage and provide assistance to those who seek to violate the law. The resolution correctly states that Prop. 39 law was intended to ensure that public school facilities “be shared fairly among all public school pupils including those in charter schools.” (Cal. Ed. Code, Section 47614(a)). The resolution also correctly states that Prop. 39 law “requires school districts to make facilities (including both classroom and non-classroom space) available to charter [public] schools.” (Cal. Ed. Code, Section 47614(b)). In essence, Prop. 39 law is a legal mandate that protects a basic fundamental right – the right of all public school students to have equitable access to public learning spaces

regardless of the type of public school they attend – traditional, magnet, pilot or charter. School districts must adhere to the law and so too should this Council.

The resolution also states that “in 2018 LAUSD received a proposal from GANAS Academy to co-locate on the campus of Catskill Elementary School.” This is incorrect. GANAS did not request to co-locate at Catskill. Rather, LAUSD made the decision to offer GANAS a Prop. 39 co-location at Catskill based on its own analysis of the site’s capacity and enrollment trends. It is also important to clarify that, per Prop. 39 law and the Prop. 39 Implementing Regulations, school districts may not simply offer charter public school students the leftover space on a campus. The law requires that school districts share any and all public learning spaces with charter students because charter students are public school students.

Unfortunately, the resolution introduced by this Council is not oriented towards solutions. Instead of proposing strategies to bring together the parents, teachers, and students at Catskill and GANAS, this Council has made concerted, intentional efforts to drive a wedge between the two. Moreover, this Council has made a clear and public declaration of support for the violation of Prop. 39 state law and has demonstrated an improper bias against Carson families and voters who choose to send their children to charter public schools.

For reasons outlined above, we urge this Council to vote “no” on Resolution No. 19-086. Rather, the Council should use its influence to find ways to unite the Carson community and support all public school families, both traditional and charter. Should you have any questions about Prop. 39 and/or the GANAS program, please don’t hesitate to contact Ebony Wheaton, CCSA Director of Facilities at ewheaton@ccsa.org.

Wholeheartedly,



Ebony Wheaton
Director of Facilities, Greater Los Angeles
California Charter Schools Association

Cc:

Mayor Albert Robles
Mayor Pro Tempore Cedric L. Hicks, Sr.
Councilmember Lula Davis-Holmes
Councilmember Jawane Hilton
Councilmember Jim Dear
Clerk Donesia L. Gause Aldana
Treasurer Monica Cooper